

Character Sketch

When you write a character sketch, you are introducing your reader to someone you know. You want the reader to have a strong mental image of that person including how the person looks, acts, talks and thinks.

A good way to write a character sketch is to put your person in a real setting and tell a little story about an encounter or an experience you had with him or her. Focus on the details that represent that person's unique qualities.

You are creating a snapshot of this person and making him or her come alive. Remember to show and not tell!

There are 3 elements of characterization:

- **Physical appearance** - What does the character look like?
- **Actions, speech, behavior** - What does the character do/say? How does the character behave?
- **Interactions with others** - How do others react to the character?

Resources:

Authors Speak:

<http://www.channel4learning.net/sites/bookbox/writerstoolkit/home.htm>

Examples of Character Description:

http://www.oregonread.org/conf_handouts/mysteryex_character.pdf

Language Features:

http://english.unitecology.ac.nz/resources/units/create_char/language_fe

Character Traits List:

http://www.readwritethink.org/lesson_images/lesson175/traits.pdf

Teacher Resource:

http://english.unitecnology.ac.nz/resources/units/create_char/description.

Character Trait Exemplar:

Dan the Gardner looks as if he belongs in his garden. He is about seventy years old and spends all day pottering outside. Everyday he wears the same grubby old hat, along with his equally dirty faded blue overalls that have holes in the knees. These holes have come from all the hours he spends on his knees as he weeds and plants. He has even worn holes in the toes of his sneakers! For a person who works outside each day Dan is a surprisingly plump old chap whose double chin completely hides his neck. In fact I thought at first he didn't have a neck! I could see no sign of it. Often I see Dan eating his favorite food - ice cream - while he is working away in the garden. That will be why he looks so much like a roly-poly garden gnome with his wispy grey hair sticking out from under his floppy old hat and his fat tummy wobbling like a jelly as he plods around his garden.

Dan hates snails. He says they eat his precious plants so he goes out at night to catch them and drowns them in buckets of hot water. He says, "I will never use snail bait as long as I live!" He believes the good animals, like hedgehogs, would eat it and they would also die. Dan actually believes that the best way to deal with pests is the natural way. He believes he is a natural predator for the snails so that is how he will deal with snails in his garden. "I am going out on snail patrol," he says to his wife as he disappears into the darkness lugging a bucket of steaming water.